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No. 698 Twopence December, 1961

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THE UNITARIAN

A MAGAZINE FOR FREE CHRISTIANS

A BRUSH WITH AN ANGEL

by J. Martin Hall.

A land-girl who once dropped into my church at Christmas told me she never felt Christmas had arrived until she had been to a Christmas Service. If her view is typical we are going to have a fine chance of feeling Christmas arrive this year because, very accommodatingly, Sunday falls this year on Christmas Eve.

I am with this land-girl about Christmas every bit. Something has to happen in me before ever I really feel that Christmas has arrived. Love has got to come down at Christmas and "stars and shepherds" must give "the sign."

To-day Christmas comes in so many ways. The brief denial of goodwill when people dive along the counter to grasp the best Christmas gifts—and that is Christmas. The

parcel-laden father heaving himself through turnstiles and vast swing doors and that is Christmas as well. Aunty Mary artistically looping shining tinsel on the Christmas tree is Christmas, and so is Jane hopefully tucking the piece of pre-Christian mistletoe above the portrait of Uncle Joe. Christmas is the jostling procession of crinolines, stage coaches, cosy inns and sparkler Christmas cards that march over the mantelpiece, across the piano and do not even respect the television set itself. It is plum puddings and bulging stockings, magic thorns and kneeling kine, Mr. Fezziwig's twinkling calves and sweet singing in the choir. We see Christmas in so many ways.

Through all the welter of the modern Christmas, many want to feel, like the land-girl, what Christmas really is. Some peaceful moment must be found. It was never better experienced I think than when to shepherds following trades, as plain and prosy as ours "all seated on the ground, The angel of the Lord came down And glory shone around."

That angel could have a brush with us this year. It could be in the Carol Service. I hope it is. You may feel it in a particularly cherished present. A Christmas card or a few choice lines might stir those wings. The angel brushed up against me once in the self-composed, self-drawn Christmas greeting of a poet who sang of The Golden Child within the ship of the moon who nightly ties up on the quays that border our human shores to redeem our life and bring us hope. What an imagination that girl has! I wonder how she will introduce Jesus to us this year. But remember, please, the glory that shines around is not just satisfying emotions; it is understanding how waifs suffer and outcasts feel. See you go out of your way this Christmas then, and mind you give someone else good cheer. God bless us everyone.

OUR CHURCHES OVERSEAS

AUCKLAND UNITARIAN CHURCH

by Mrs. Dorothy Smith

As early as 1898 an advertisement appeared in an Auckland newspaper inviting local Unitarians to a meeting. A small group met and a tailor amongst them conducted services. Later that year they had a visit from the Rev. George Walters of Sydney, who gave encouragement to the group. Communication was made with the headquarters of the Unitarian body in London and they were visited by the Rev. M. Lamble of Melbourne. Under his guidance the group organised itself and applied to London for a minister. The Rev. William Jellie, of Ipswich, become the first Unitarian minister in Auckland, holding services at the Oddfellow's Hall in Hobson Street. Later this same year the congregation moved to a more central room adjoining a public house near the Town Hall, mustering as many as twenty members in the morning and 80 to 130 in the evening, in an atmosphere more "spirituous than spiritual." It was determined that a church of their own should be built in Auckland.

A site was chosen in Ponsonby Road, leased from the City Council. One of the members, Mr. White, was a practising architect. He designed a small church of great dignity and charm. Less than four months after the laying of the foundation stone on August 1901, a dedication service was held on Wednesday, December 4 and on Sunday, December 8.

Addresses were given by the Rev. Jellie, the Rev. Walters, of Sydney, Mr. J. C. Macky, a prominent business man of Auckland, and Mr. George Fowlds, Minister of Education at that time.

The church organ is one of the finest in Auckland. It was presented in 1904 by Mr. J. C. Macky in gratitude for the recovery of a member of his family from a severe illness. At this time the congregation numbered about 150, and it provided its church with a fine and beautifully carved pulpit made from the wood of the native rimu tree.

Members of the original families still attend the church. Many of these were outstanding social and civil workers. Mr. Jellie was prominent in furthering the lecturing on behalf of adult education in the Auckland branch of the W.E..A and other associations.

Two World Wars had an adverse effect upon the progress of the Unitarian Church in Auckland, on that in Wellington, and on groups throughout the country. There was no minister of the Church in Auckland during World War Two. Mr. Jellie had retired, but in spite of his great age he helped the lay speakers of this period to hold services.

In the library of the Auckland Church are photographs of the ministers from Mr. Jellie, as a young man, and his many successors down to the Rev. E. H. Morris, who, after the last war, was minister for eight years. During those eight years times were hard for the faithful minority of members who attended his services, struggling with a shortage of money and increased costs.

In December 1956, Mr. Maurice Wilsie, a Unitarian who had led a Fellowship of the Unitarian Church in California, and a practising psychotherapist, was asked to take over the ministry of the church upon the departure of Mr. Morris to Coventry, England.

Thanks to the hard work and foresight of Mr. Wilsie membership of the church has increased and is still increasing. He has been instrumental in reviving the New Zealand Society of Unitarians. This society publishes quarterly the magazine "Motive" which aims at keeping the Unitarians of New Zealand in touch. A group has now sprung up in Christchurch and regular meetings are held there. Shortly after his return from England last year Mr. Lincoln Gribble was elected secretary of the New Zealand Society of Unitarians.

There are several active groups connected to the Auckland Church and meeting on its premises. The Friday Night Fellowship, begun during the ministry of Mr. Morris, has well over thirty members, most of them Unitarians or prospective ones. It meets each week to listen to and discuss talks on literature and philosophical and social problems. A mental health and a social justice group functions in conjunction with the church. The music committee provides singers and instrumental music at services.

The children are not forgotten. There is a "Children's Hour" at ten-thirty on Sunday morning. Because Auckland's congregation is spread over a large area difficulty arises in connection with transport. An active Parents' Council has been organised and is carrying on well.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Hello, everybody ! This is Raymond. That was a funny ending we had last month, wasn't it ? I tackled Uncle George about it; I told him

that last line wasn't a part of our piece. He agreed and said something about gremlins. What are they? Aren't grown-ups peculiar sometimes?

Anyway, Dad came into the room the other morning to find me writing.

"Hello, Raymond," he said, "industrious, eh?"

"Yes, Dad, just a bit."

"What are you doing?"

"My Christmas cards."

"You say it as though you had a great pile to get through."

"Well, I've saved up and I've bought seven."

"Seven? Good. I hope you've been careful about the sentiments expressed therein."

"Pardon, Dad?"

"I hope you've chosen cards with suitable words."

"How d'you mean, Dad?"

"The words inside the cards. You should make sure they're suitable for the people you're sending them to."

"Does it matter all that much?"

"It can. Some of the verses, for instance, are dreadful; quite silly and—er—"

"Sloppy?"

"Er—yes, that'll do. If you have friends who prefer that sort of thing, by all means send it. If not, don't. Fit the words to the person. Sometimes you can create rather tricky situations because your ideas and intentions are not clear."

"Don't you like verses, Dad?"

"Can't say I do. A good, plain, honest-to-goodness greeting; that's all I want."

"I see, Dad. You're probably right."

"Oh, thank you. Now, who are you sending cards to?"

"One to Sam, then there's Alf, Gordon, Alice, you and Mum, Lisbeth and Uncle George."

"What about all your young readers? And the older ones too?"

"Who are they?"

"Why, those who read the Corner, of course."

"Oh, dear! Yes. Oh, I'd nearly forgotten. But I can't send them all one, can I, Dad? You don't give me all that much pocket money."

"Never mind about that. What's wrong with a greeting to them all—through the Children's Corner?"

"Yes, Dad. That's not a bad idea at all."

"Well, thank you, Raymond. Now get down to it."

"All right, here we go: TO ALL MY FRIENDS IN THE CHILDREN'S CORNER—BOYS AND GIRLS AND GROWN-UPS TOO—LOTS OF GOOD WISHES FOR CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR—FROM RAYMOND."

UNITARIAN COLLEGE, MANCHESTER

Friends from more than 20 of our chapels were in the college library when the President, the Rev. F. Cottier, opened the new session.

The Principal, the Rev. F. Kenworthy, reported that there were now seven full time students, one lay pastor, two special students and one external; with one more to come. He gave details of major repairs and structural alterations to the building, the maintenance of which, with limited resources, took an undue proportion of his care. Prizes won during the previous session were presented by the President.

The Rev. A. J. Long, M.A., then addressed the meeting on "Half believers of our casual creeds." This was a strong and clear appeal to Unitarians to think more deeply in

order to possess greater intellectual conviction; to realise that man's works and influence do depend profoundly on what he believes. Those who felt incapable of forming their own convictions should gratefully accept the conclusions of the more gifted in wrestling with intellectual problems. The speaker emphasised that in trying to establish the relevance of theology he was not suggesting a permanent Unitaraian creed but wished to show that our attempts to build the Holy City were doomed to failure if we ignored the fundamental importance of basic theology.

After a pleasant social tea-break the annual meeting of subscribers took place. Mr. H. B. Moore, chairman of the committee, thanked the Rev. F. Cottier for his fine work as president and said the college was fortunate in having as his successor Professor Dorothy Tarrant, most distinguished scholar and eminent Unitarian. The hon. treasurer, Mr. S. Mansell spoke seriously of the very careful economy of the college and the difficulty of raising the necessary finance for repairs and maintenance. More personal subscribers would be greatly welcomed and anyone interested should communicate without delay with the hon. subscriptions secretary, Mr. H. Jackson, 26, Leach Street, Prestwich, Manchester.—**K.T.**

UNITARIAN HOLIDAY FELLOWSHIP, 1961

Seeing Europe in the company of fellow Unitarians, especially when the party is blessed with some jolly company, is a spiritual and physical adventure never to be forgotten. Such was the experience of the Unitarians who, again this summer, went abroad under the leadership of the Rev. and Mrs. G. W. Parkinson.

Norway captured the imagination of the June party when, under the guidance of Mrs. Parkinson, they explored Bergen, spent five nights at Ulvik set amidst the strange wild beauty of the Hardangerfjord, one night on the shores of the peaceful and fascinating Sognefjord and six nights at Loen on the Nordfjord which strikes into the heart of Western Norway. Among the most exciting memories are a visit to the largest glacier in Europe and the "Midsummer Festivities" which culminated in the lighting of bonfires on the hill tops.

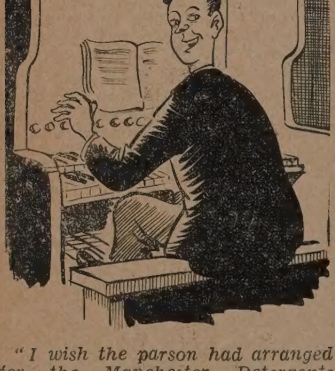
Mr. and Mrs. Parkinson led their respective parties to Switzerland in August—after travelling together to Basle they divided and one group went to Davos and the other journeyed to Brunnen and then ascended by funicular railway to Axenstein and found, at an altitude of 2,400 feet, a view unique in its grandeur. Tours to Engelberg, Lucerne, Lugano and the Rhone Glacier provided the party with vivid glimpses of the wonder, variety and beauty of Switzerland.

Mr. Parkinson's party had a rather more exhilarating time 5,300 feet up in the alpine town of Davos which, with its 30 sanatoria, is a world health centre. Variety was certainly the keynote of the excursions which covered six countries—Austria, Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland and Liechtenstein—and began with an ascent by coach, negotiating 48 hairpain bends (all numbered), up to the Stelvio Pass (9,300 feet) where the skiers were busy and there was a breath-taking view of the great glaciers; a very enjoyable contrast was provided by a descent to Lake Como, a sail and a siesta in the warmth of the Italian sun.

Undoubtedly, the highlight of the tour for most members of the party was attendance at the I.A.R.F. Congress, meeting old friends, making contact with kindred spirits from both Europe and America and listening to speeches expressing their aspirations, hopes and fears and throwing much light on the reasons for our divided world.

SOCIAL SERVICE

The Social Service Department of the General Assembly is anxious to discover the extent that congregations are engaged in social service activities. It is interested to know too of particular work undertaken by individual Unitarians. Information to Arthur Peacock, Great Frenches Park, Copthorne, Crawley Down, Sussex.



"I wish the parson had arranged for the Manchester Detergents Works' Mixed Choir to sing something other than 'Who are these arrayed in whiter than white?'"

NEWS AND VIEWS

HOME CHURCHES

On a beautiful autumn day Stockport Unitarian Church said goodbye to the Rev. Richard G. Kimball, A.B., S.T.B. Mr. Kimball came to the church just over thirteen months ago, during which time he has transfigured Stockport Unitarianism into a happy, thriving community. The Sunday School has been reopened; the U.Y.P.L. has emerged bringing into the church a crowd of enthusiastic young people ready to work hard for the furtherance of their Church and for Unitarianism; the Women's League and the Men's League have been given fresh insight and fellowship; a Home Discussion Group has been formed; the Church Calendar has been given a "face lift"; and everyone has made countless friends through the infectious friendliness and energy that Mr Kimball emanated to all around him.

So it was with sad hearts that the congregation gathered on Sunday morning October 29th, to watch Mr Kimball's last christening, and to welcome into the church family the many new members who have joined the church since Mr. Kimball arrived in September 1960. As a congregation of over 200 moved into the church amongst the shafts of mellow sunlight that poured in through the stained glass windows, it seemed very hard to realise that this was the last time they would be sharing an hour of worship with this young man that they had all come to love in the months he had spent with them as their minister.

A coffee reception followed both morning and evening services; and at the evening reception, the Senior Warden, Mr. Charles Bushrod, made a presentation to Mr. Kimball of an engraved wrist watch; and Miss Susan Sutcliffe, the president of the U.Y.P.L., gave a Country Life Book of England inscribed with the names of all the U.Y.P.Lers.

On the previous Monday, the Home Discussion Group had presented Mr. Kimball with a handsome pigskin wallet; and the Sunday School had given him a book with a photograph and personal message from each child in the school, which Mr. Kimball told them would go with him across the 3,000 miles of the Atlantic to his home in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

And so it was that another year in the history of the Stockport Unitarian Church came to an end as members, friends and visitors said goodbye to the Rev. Richard Kimball at the end of one of the most successful ministries the church has ever known. The Church family has been strengthened; minds have been revived, and thoughts have been provoked by the influence and presence of this young American Harvard-trained minister. However, the "goodbye" may only be "au revoir" as Mr. Kimball hopes to return for a holiday in two years' time.

The Autumnal Meeting of the Manchester District Association held in October discussed "The Future of the Association; its policy and purpose." The Rev. Eric Shirvell Price spoke on "Advance Movements," Mr. A. E. R. Goulty on "Financial Framework," Mr. Frankyn Johnson on "The relationship of the M.D.A. to the local churches and to the G.A.," and the Revs. Glyn Pruce and Donald Mills on Sunday Schools.

The U.Y.P.L at SWINTON is organising fortnightly programmes for Sunday evenings, after service, in which the congregation is being asked to participate.

On the last Sunday in October Mr. George Sumner, the Chapel organist, gave a recital of music by César Franck at ALTRINCHAM. On the first Sunday in December, the preacher will be Rabbi P. Selvin Goldberg. The service will coincide with Brotherhood Week organised by the Manchester Council of Christians and Jews.

The British committee of the I.R.F. is organising the "sub" or Europeans' I.R.F." for 1962. The site will be a Y.M.C.A. camp on the shores of Lake Windermere, the date July 14-21. Second week plans include canal cruising, Dormobile touring in Ireland, holiday in Edinburgh and the Scottish Highlands, Pony trekking, hiking and hostelling and

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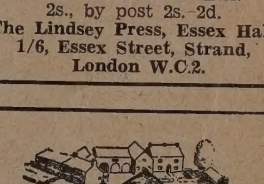

Northern S.S. Federation
UNITARIAN HOLIDAY HOMES
GREAT HUCKLOW, BUXTON
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the Lakes and Wales, all to end with a "real" International Flagg Weekend, July 27-30. The "main" conference will be in America. Many expenses will be met by the hosts, but all potential American I.R.F.ers are asked to save £200 to cover their costs.

The National Men's League held a very successful Rally at DENTON on September 30th. The speaker was the Rev. Lionel O. Reed and his subject "Is Religion Necessary?" A social evening followed.

A couple whose parents and grand-parents were all married at PADIHAM were themselves married there in October. They were Miss Vera Cunliffe and Mr. Arthur Harrison. The bride is Padiham's secretary.

PUDSEY celebrated its one hundredth anniversary with a special service on November 5th. The service was conducted by the Rev. Maurice Bonner and the preacher was the President of the General Assembly, the Rev. J. Harry Smith.

At their October meeting "The Seekers," the STOCKPORT Unitarian Home Discussion Group, had as leader of their discussion the Rev. C. H. Bartlett. The discussion was on "A report on Clinical Psychology"

KIDDERMINSTER has been admitted to the Kidderminster United Christian Council. The minister the Rev. Edgar Hill, writes "I really believe that the spirit of Baxter is at work in this town of ours, and a coming together is in process of accomplishment, which would fill him, were he with us to-day, with delight."

After the monthly evening service at URMSTON in October, Mr. Grenville Needham, British secretary of the I.R.F., showed lantern slides of his recent visit to our churches in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. His listeners included a party of Altrincham U.Y.P.Lers who had joined the evening service.

The Town Centre of CHESTERFIELD is to undergo another face-lift so the Chapel's old schoolrooms erected in 1831 are to come down. The Chapel Trustees are now negotiating with the Corporation about a plan for new premises. An anniversary Tea was held on November 7th. Following an organ recital by Mr. J. W. Parkin there was a talk by Mr. Ronald Hornby, of the Unitarian Forward Movement Committee.

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